United Nations system CEB/2002/1

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

6 June 2002
English
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Summary of the conclusions of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination at its first regular session of 2002

FAO headquarters, Rome
10 and 11 April

Summary of CEB conclusions requiring specific follow-up

CEB private meeting

The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held a private meeting, chaired by the Secretary-General, on 10 April 2002 at which Executives Heads were briefed and had an extensive exchange of views on the situation in the Middle East, developments concerning Iraq, Afghanistan, developments in Africa and the international community's response, and the fight against terrorism. Special attention was also given to the outcomes of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, held in Doha, and the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, as well as the forthcoming World Food Summit: Five Years Later (Rome), the special session of the General Assembly on children (New York) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa). Emphasis was placed on the importance of addressing these conferences and summits as a continuum, ensuring that they are mutually reinforcing and that the lessons learned from past conferences will guide the system on ways to maximize the impact of forthcoming ones.

Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: "Treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria"

CEB addressed the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, focusing on the theme "Treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria", on the basis of an executive paper that the Secretary-General had asked the World Health Organization (WHO) to prepare in consultation with organizations most directly involved, for the consideration of CEB.

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CEB welcomed the executive paper prepared by WHO and expressed its appreciation for the work of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health both in analysing the financial and other needs necessary to deliver the millennium development goals in health and in stressing the linkages of health to poverty reduction and to long-term economic growth.

In endorsing the WHO paper as a basis for the future work of the United Nations system and as a contribution to meeting the millennium development goals, CEB re-emphasized the multisectoral challenge of achieving the health goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and called for mutually reinforcing actions in education, water, sanitation, population, nutrition, agriculture, environment, rural development, sustainable human settlements, empowerment of women and investment in children. CEB also called for wider use of the multisectoral approach to treating and preventing human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), noting that the United Nations system is already applying a multisectoral approach in its system-wide strategy for combating HIV/AIDS.

CEB concluded that the interrelationship between health and other goals of the Millennium Declaration should be made explicit in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and in the system's support strategies at the country level. It stressed the importance of securing the place of health in poverty reduction strategies and assisting countries in tracking progress towards the achievement of health-related goals of the Millennium Declaration. CEB highlighted the need to focus the system's efforts on outcome strategies to overcome sectoral fragmentation and bring about measurable results.

CEB members discussed a rights-based approach to human health to supplement the investment analysis in the report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health.

CEB noted the need for further analysis and incorporation of a focus on reproductive health, as well as for greater attention to prevention aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In a like manner, a culture of prevention should be applicable to malaria which poses serious health problems in many parts of the world. In this regard, the United Nations system organizations need to support research and collaborative efforts to address this scourge.

It was noted that the United Nations system should be a model of best practice in combating HIV/AIDS both at headquarters and in the field. Present efforts should be reinforced through effective follow-up action in implementing the system-wide strategy to combat HIV/AIDS. In this regard, CEB called on its members to fully implement the United Nations system's existing policies on HIV/AIDS in the workplace, inter alia, through allocation of the required resources.

Reports of the High-level Committees

(a) Programme matters

(i) System-wide support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

CEB considered this item in the light of the update provided by the Deputy Secretary-General on the implementation of NEPAD and the discussions at the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP).

CEB reiterated that NEPAD deserves the full and continuing support of the international community and provides an appropriate framework for the United Nations system with respect to maximizing the effectiveness and impact of its contribution to the sustainable development of Africa. It urged organizations of the system to maintain their current engagement in Africa, while responding to specific requests for support in advancing the implementation of NEPAD. It also called on CEB members to continue to consult and coordinate with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as the system's key interlocutor on NEPAD.

CEB requested HLCP to maintain NEPAD in its agenda and to keep its implementation under review.

(ii) Functioning of HLCP

CEB welcomed the report of HLCP on its third session containing a review of its terms of reference and invited the Committee to continue its efforts to enhance its functioning, including an effective distribution of responsibilities with other coordinating bodies. It took note of the measures adopted by the Committee to improve its working methods and stressed the need for appropriate high-level representation in the Committee to ensure the effective exercise of its functions.

Noting the crucial importance of country-level coordination in advancing the system-wide objectives of CEB, the Board welcomed the conclusions reached by HLCP in this regard, including the pragmatic approach adopted by the Committee in its interactions with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), with a view to promoting synergies and overall coherence.

CEB noted the new, flexible and pragmatic arrangements for inter-agency coordination in the programme areas covered by the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) subsidiary bodies. It welcomed the Committee's decision to monitor and give, as required, policy guidance to inter-agency thematic networks, and called on the CEB secretariat to provide systematic and objective information and support to the Committee in this regard. In this context, CEB concurred with the need to give special attention to ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to continue to secure organized inter-agency coordination in areas of system-wide concern, particularly freshwater, that are crucial for development and for which several agencies share responsibility.

(b) Management issues

CEB took note of the report of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) on its third session and expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee, particularly the continuing attention given by it to information and communication technologies (ICT) coordination and the security and safety of staff.

Executive Heads stressed the special importance they attach to the review under way by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to reform the system that underpins pay and benefits in the common system, noting that the case for far-reaching reform is compelling, and that the risk of inaction in meeting the repeatedly expressed concern of the General Assembly and other governing bodies over the competitivity of United Nations conditions of employment and in addressing the lack of flexibility of the current system in respect of responding to organizations' diverse needs, far outweighs the challenges associated with the initiative. Stressing that these reforms are vital for the improvement of organizational performance and to complement other major management reforms under way, Executive Heads called on the Commission to exercise leadership in moving forward this important initiative.

CEB recalled its decision calling for an independent review aimed at strengthening both the international civil service and the Commission itself. It expressed the hope that such a review would be undertaken as soon as possible.

CEB noted that the two High-level Committees are making good progress in their work and have moved beyond the organizational phase towards addressing substantive issues — both within the scope of their own responsibilities and in support of CEB. It expressed its appreciation to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the two Committees and noted the support provided by the secretariat which is accountable to all CEB members.

Other matters

Dates of next CEB session

It is proposed that the next session of CEB be held on Friday and Saturday, 25 and 26 October 2002, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. To facilitate advance planning, CEB decided to set, in the future, the dates of its first regular session during the first week of April and its second regular session in the last week of October.

CEB paid tribute to Mr. Mike Moore and Mrs. Mary Robinson whose terms in office would end before the next session of CEB, as well as to Mrs. Catherine Bertini whose term in office had already ended prior to the present CEB session. CEB commended their outstanding leadership as heads of their respective organizations and cited their invaluable contributions to international cooperation and development, and the advancement of human rights and provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as to the work of CEB.

I. Introduction

1. The first series of meetings of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2002 was held at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, at the invitation of the Director-General, on 10 and 11 April 2002.

2. A *private meeting* of CEB members, chaired by the Secretary-General, was held in the afternoon of 10 April. Executives Heads were briefed and had an extensive exchange of views on the situation in the Middle East, developments concerning Iraq, Afghanistan, developments in Africa and the international community's response, and the fight against terrorism. Special attention was also given to the outcomes of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Doha and the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico), as well as the forthcoming World Food Summit: Five Years Later (Rome), the special session of the General Assembly on children (New York) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa), and to the importance of addressing them as a continuum and ensuring that they are mutually reinforcing and that the lessons learned from past conferences will guide the system on ways to maximize the impact of forthcoming ones.

3. CEB members also held a *retreat* at FAO headquarters on 11 April, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, focusing on the proposal for the campaign and the costing of the millennium development goals. Emphasis was placed on ensuring clear linkages between country-level reporting and national ownership of the reporting on the millennium development goals.

4. The present report covers the outcome of the *regular session* of CEB held at FAO headquarters in the morning of 10 April and chaired by the Director-General of FAO, at the request of the Secretary-General.

5. This series of meetings was held in Rome on the eve of the World Food Summit: Five Years Later, to be held at FAO headquarters from 10 to 13 June. The Summit will be an important step within broader United Nations system efforts to achieve the millennium development goals. It will help in particular to refocus the international agenda and mobilize political will and financial resources for this purpose. Food security is a multidimensional challenge requiring the involvement of various CEB member organizations in addressing its different facets. The Director-General of FAO thus stressed that he looked forward to the participation of CEB members in the Summit.

Agenda

6. The agenda of the first regular session of 2002 of CEB was as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: "Treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria".
3. Reports of the High-level Committees:
   (a) Programme matters:
      (i) System-wide Support for the New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
      (ii) Functioning of the High-level Committee on Planning (HLCP);
   (b) Management issues.
4. Other matters.

7. On behalf of the Secretary-General and CEB members, the Chairman welcomed Mr. James Morris, the new Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) who was attending CEB for the first time. He also welcomed Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat; he observed that at its fifty-sixth session, the General Assembly in resolution 56/206 had decided to transform the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements into the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), giving it the same status as the other United Nations funds and programmes that participate in CEB.

II. Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: "Treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria"

8. In his introduction, the Chairman noted that, over the past two years, Executive Heads had had an extremely useful dialogue aimed at ensuring a coordinated approach to the United Nations Millennium Declaration[1] and its follow-up. He recalled that the Secretary-General, drawing on these discussions, had proposed — and Executive Heads had agreed — that the agenda for CEB sessions should be related to the themes identified in his "road map" for the annual reports that would be submitted to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. This approach would help ensure that the process of reporting on the Millennium Declaration did not simply serve to record progress, but formed part of a system-wide effort to strengthen the coherence and impact of the system's policies and operations in support of the key goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. The Chairman pointed out that, accordingly, CEB was taking up "Treatment and prevention of diseases, including HIV/AIDS and malaria" at its present session, and would discuss, at its second regular session, the follow-up by the system of the Secretary-General's report on preventing armed conflict. He noted that conflict prevention was an extremely wide-ranging and crucial subject for the system and that the United Nations Secretariat would take the lead and prepare a position paper in this regard in consultation with CEB members for review by HLCP prior to the next CEB meeting.

9. The Chairman invited Dr. Gro Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), to introduce the executive paper that the Secretary-General had asked WHO to prepare in consultation with organizations most directly involved, for the consideration of CEB.

10. The Director-General of WHO reviewed the health-related goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and drew on the report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health which presented an analysis of the current situation with respect to human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria and tuberculosis, among other diseases. She stressed the multisectoral challenge of the health-related goals of the Millennium Declaration, focusing on the links between health and poverty reduction, as well as between health and economic and social development. She also drew attention to the estimates of additional resources required for achieving the health goals of the Millennium Declaration and outlined the main challenges facing the organizations of the system in meeting those goals.

11. The Chairman underscored two points that had been highlighted in the HLCP discussion on the treatment and prevention of diseases, and in the annotated agenda of CEB. First, progress in the health sector required a host of mutually reinforcing interventions in both the economic and social spheres. These were well articulated in the report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health and brought out in the HLCP discussion. Almost every CEB member organization had a contribution to make. There was a need to consider what the organizations of the United Nations system could do — individually and collectively — to bring about the synergies required to make real and sustained progress in the health sector. At the same time, it was necessary to reflect on how best to ensure that advances in the health sector impacted positively on efforts to achieve the other millennium development goals, and on the contribution that progress in the health sector could make to the policy outcomes that each organization was promoting in its own area of competence. Secondly, CEB should see what the system could learn from this exercise, as it approached the broader task of coordinating its work towards the achievement of the millennium development goals.

12. In the ensuing discussion, CEB members highlighted the interrelated nature of the millennium development goals and the need for the system to take a holistic approach to their implementation. It was pointed out that the millennium development goals should be pursued not only in their own right, but also in their interrelationships, as manifestations of a single, overarching goal — poverty eradication.

13. It was important to take account of these interrelationships also in making estimates of the additional resources required to achieve the millennium development goals.

14. The importance of sustaining progress in the health sector through economic growth and increased personal incomes was emphasized. The trend whereby

private sector funding of health research was rising faster than publicly funded research was noted. Attention was also drawn to the close linkages that exist between human health and the environment as shown by the effects of climate change and increasing exposure to harmful chemicals on the incidence and prevalence of diseases.

15. In addressing different dimensions of HIV/AIDS and its impact, CEB members recalled its devastating consequences for different sectors of the economy and the structures of society, including the educational systems of many countries. The importance of preventive education in combating HIV/AIDS was emphasized. Reference was also made to the need to provide for the management of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the perspective of sustainable human settlements and poverty reduction efforts through slum upgrading, including the maintenance and improvement of human settlements standards to facilitate access to shelter for AIDS-affected persons and orphans. The importance of extending programmes to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS to refugees and internally displaced persons was also highlighted.

16. The dissemination of information on the treatment and prevention of infectious diseases, utilizing existing infrastructures, particularly in rural areas, was viewed as a crucial requirement. It was further noted that the workplace is assuming growing importance in the treatment and prevention of diseases as enterprises increasingly recognize the benefits of good health.

17. **CEB welcomed the executive paper prepared by WHO and expressed its appreciation for the work of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health both in analysing the financial and other needs necessary to deliver the millennium development goals in health and in stressing the linkages of health to poverty reduction and to long-term economic growth.**

18. **In endorsing the WHO paper as a basis for the future work of the United Nations system and as a contribution to meeting the millennium development goals, CEB re-emphasized the multisectoral challenge of achieving the health goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and called for mutually reinforcing actions in education, water, sanitation, population, nutrition, agriculture, environment, rural development, sustainable human settlements, empowerment of women and investment in children. CEB also called for wider use of the multisectoral approach to treating and preventing HIV/AIDS, noting that the United Nations system was already applying a multisectoral approach in its system-wide strategy for combating HIV/AIDS.**

19. **CEB concluded that the interrelationship between health and other goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration should be made explicit in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and in the system's support strategies at the country level. It stressed the importance of securing the place of health in poverty reduction strategies and assisting countries to track progress towards the achievement of the health-related goals of the Millennium Declaration. CEB highlighted the need to focus the system's efforts on outcome strategies to overcome sectoral fragmentation and bring about measurable results.**

20. **CEB members discussed a rights-based approach to human health to supplement the investment analysis in the report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health.**

21. **CEB noted the need for further analysis and incorporation of a focus on reproductive health, as well as for greater attention to prevention aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In a like manner, a culture of prevention should be applicable to malaria which poses serious health problems in many parts of the world. In this regard, the United Nations system organizations need to support research and collaborative efforts to address this scourge.**

22. **It was noted that the United Nations system should be a model of best practice in combating HIV/AIDS both at headquarters and in the field. Present efforts should be reinforced through effective follow-up action in implementing the system-wide strategy to combat HIV/AIDS. In this regard, CEB called on its members to fully implement the United Nations system's existing policies on HIV/AIDS in the workplace, inter alia, through allocation of the resources required.**

III. Reports of the High-level Committees

A. Programme matters

1. System-wide Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

23. The Chairman recalled that Executive Heads had agreed at their last session that Africa should remain a major focus for the United Nations system and that the system should provide visible and clear support for the New Initiative for Africa, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (see ACC/2001/5, para. 9 (a)). CEB had decided that HLCP should maintain Africa in its agenda, and keep system-wide support for NEPAD under review. It had also agreed to strengthen inter-agency coordination arrangements at the regional level, and had asked the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to continue to act as a key interlocutor with African countries on NEPAD.

24. The Chairman noted that, since then, a number of important developments had taken place. The first meeting of the Heads of State Implementation Committee (HSIC) had been held in October 2001 in Abuja. The 15-member HSIC had agreed on a governing structure for NEPAD, consisting of an Implementation Committee of Heads of State, a Steering Committee and a secretariat. The Committee had also set out the main areas for which specific projects and programmes are to be developed. On the inter-agency front, immediately after the 2001 second regular session of CEB, ECA had convened a regional consultation of United Nations agencies working in Africa. This consultation had identified six thematic areas for priority collaboration within the system: infrastructure; human resource development; macroeconomic policies and trade diversification; information technology; agriculture and environment; and population and employment. The Chairman added that inter-agency actions in these areas would gain momentum as the actual programmes under NEPAD took shape — a process that was now under way. In March, African leaders had held a mini-summit in Abuja to develop programmes of economic and political reforms ahead of the G-8 Summit, to be held in Canada in June, at which NEPAD would be discussed. He concluded by noting that African leaders were exerting tremendous efforts to implement the vision contained in NEPAD and that developments confirmed the conclusion of CEB that NEPAD offered the right framework for the United Nations system with respect to contributing effectively to Africa's development. He noted the fact that the next HSIC meeting would convene during the World Food Summit: Five Years Later, in June in Rome.

25. Referring to the March HSIC meeting in Abuja, the Deputy Secretary-General noted that important advances had been made in relation to key aspects of the action plan under elaboration, including political and economic governance and the establishment of an African peer review mechanism. The Committee had approved codes and standards for economic and corporate governance, but it had still to decide on two key issues — where responsibility for providing staff support to the African peer review mechanism would be located, and the completion of draft proposals on political governance. She observed that NEPAD continued to receive wide support within the region and was viewed by donors as a very promising avenue of cooperation with Africa. The basic challenge for the United Nations system remained how to formulate a wholly coherent response to NEPAD, in the perspective of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit in July and the General Assembly's forthcoming assessment of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.[2] ECA intended to convene another inter-agency consultation meeting following the OAU Summit in July to take stock of the situation and further elaborate an action plan. She drew the attention of CEB to the decision taken, following the October 2001 inter-agency consultation, to add "human rights", humanitarian and refugee concerns to the areas identified at the consultations for further collaboration.

26. The Chairman indicated that his understanding of the HSIC decision was that an independent body would be responsible for supporting the peer review mechanism. More generally, he stressed the importance for the organizations of the system of adjusting and responding to the requirements of African leaders and the need, therefore, to await the outcome of the next OAU Summit before deciding on the inter-agency interventions that may be needed.

27. The Vice-Chairman of HLCP briefed CEB on the Committee's discussions on NEPAD. At its last session, HLCP had highlighted the importance of mutual commitments of African countries' and of the

international community's efforts to promote an enabling environment — nationally and internationally — most conducive to African development. The Committee had also stressed the need to utilize and build on existing institutions and mechanisms to organize and promote United Nations system support to NEPAD at the national and regional levels. The Committee considered that organizations of the system should maintain their engagement in Africa, while continuing to respond to specific requests for support in advancing the implementation of NEPAD. The importance of networking and information-sharing among the organizations concerned in support of the role of ECA as the system's interlocutor on NEPAD had also been stressed.

28. Executive Heads welcomed and expressed strong support for the renewed major efforts being made throughout Africa to foster peace and promote sound governance. Sustaining these efforts, including the management of internal and inter-State conflicts and the associated problems of refugees and internally displaced persons, was seen as an essential criterion for creating a conducive environment for sustainable development and investments in Africa. At the same time, it was stressed that good governance and conflict prevention should be supported in their own right, rather than as conditionalities, and that problems that might arise in one country should not be allowed to affect the international community's approach to the whole continent. The mechanisms for conflict prevention set in place through OAU and the peer review mechanism launched by HSIC were important initiatives and should be viewed in this perspective.

29. CEB members recalled that a doubling of official development assistance (ODA) flows to Africa, and maintaining that level for a decade, were necessary to give the region a reasonable chance of meeting the international development goal of halving poverty by the year 2015. In particular, CEB noted the substantial investment required if a difference was to be made with respect to fully implementing NEPAD. In this regard, additionality of resources from the international community including the United Nations system organizations was an essential condition for the success of NEPAD. This international effort should be accompanied by the mobilization of national resources for poverty eradication and development, and national policies geared to development and expansion of domestic markets, the creation of enterprises and promotion of entrepreneurship, and the generation of productive employment.

30. CEB also underscored the essential need to intensify international support for building African capacities to enable countries in Africa to benefit from new trade opportunities. Central to this effort were the diversification of African economies, fostering of the productive sector and progress as it related to trade facilitation. African leaders had also rightly placed special emphasis on infrastructure development. Supporting this effort was crucial.

31. Attention was drawn to some perceived gaps in NEPAD, including recognition of the role of science and technology in driving development; addressing the adverse consequences of rapid urbanization and the growth of urban slums; and reversing and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

32. **CEB reiterated that NEPAD deserves the full and continuing support of the international community and provides an appropriate framework for the United Nations system with respect to maximizing the effectiveness and impact of its contribution to the sustainable development of Africa. It urged organizations of the United Nations system to maintain their current engagement in Africa, while responding to specific requests for support in advancing the implementation of NEPAD. It also called on CEB members to continue to consult and coordinate with ECA as the system's key interlocutor on NEPAD.**

33. **CEB requested HLCP to maintain NEPAD in its agenda and to keep its implementation under review.**

2. Functioning of HLCP

34. The Chairman recalled that, at the last session of CEB in New York, Executive Heads had had an exchange of views on the work of HLCP and the role they expected it to play. They requested the Chairman of the Committee to review its terms of reference and put forward recommendations on ways to improve its functioning. On the basis of its work at the last session, the Committee seems well on the way to finding its niche. He welcomed the fact that the Committee was focusing its attention on the value it could add both to the work of CEB itself, and to that of the new inter-agency networks that were being established as a result of decisions on the functioning of its subsidiary

machinery taken by Executive Heads at the last session. HLCP should continue to contribute to the strategic role of CEB by helping prepare its policy discussions, while at the same time freeing CEB from the burden of managing inter-agency coordination. The Committee should also be the instrument for promoting systematic follow-up to CEB conclusions. The Chairman noted that progress in these directions could only be gradual, and should be approached with realism but also vision.

35. The Vice-Chairman briefed CEB on the outcome of the Committee's discussions. He noted that HLCP was an important element in the inter-agency chain of analysis, policy advice, monitoring and accountability that should operate within the framework of CEB. The Committee had the dual role of supporting CEB and of promoting system-wide policy and programme convergence. It should carry out this dual role by helping prepare CEB sessions and providing substantive inputs on issues for its consideration such as those dealing with the follow-up to the Millennium Summit and system-wide support for Africa; by approaching its functions for fostering inter-agency coherence in a pragmatic and synergistic way, including in its interactions with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG); by providing oversight of the new, flexible arrangements for inter-agency coordination being established in the programme areas covered by the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) subsidiary bodies; and by launching new inter-agency initiatives, such as the inter-agency consultations it had initiated in the area of trade facilitation. New working methods to improve the Committee's functioning and effectiveness had been agreed upon, involving more participatory processes, more systematic resort to lead agency arrangements in the preparation of documentation, and information and knowledge-sharing between sessions. He also briefed CEB on the issues HLCP had addressed at its last session and those it expected to take up at its future sessions.

36. **CEB welcomed the report of HLCP on its third session (CEB/2002/4) and invited the Committee to continue its efforts to enhance its functioning, including an effective distribution of responsibilities with other coordinating bodies. It took note of the measures adopted by the Committee to improve its working methods and stressed the need for appropriate high-level representation in the Committee to ensure the effective exercise of its functions.**

37. **Noting the crucial importance of country-level coordination in advancing of the system-wide objectives of CEB, the Board welcomed the conclusions reached by HLCP in this regard, including the pragmatic approach adopted by the Committee in its interactions with UNDG, with a view to promoting synergies and overall coherence.**

38. **CEB noted the new, flexible and pragmatic arrangements for inter-agency coordination in the programme areas covered by the former ACC subsidiary bodies. It welcomed the Committee's decision to monitor and give, as required, policy guidance to inter-agency thematic networks, and called on the CEB secretariat to provide systematic and objective information and support to the Committee in this regard. In this context, CEB concurred with the need to give special attention to ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to continue to secure organized inter-agency coordination in areas of system-wide concern, particularly freshwater, that are crucial for development and for which several agencies share responsibility.**

B. Management issues

39. The Chairman of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) briefed CEB on the outcome of the Committee's discussions at its third session (see CEB/2002/3) focusing on: (a) a vision for information and communication technologies (ICT); (b) security and safety of staff; (c) reform of the pay and benefits system; (d) geographical balance; (e) consultations with staff representatives; and (f) follow-up on outstanding matters and future arrangements.

40. **CEB took note of the report of HLCM (CEB/2002/3) and expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee, particularly the continuing attention given by it to ICT coordination and the security and safety of staff.**

41. **Executive Heads stressed the special importance they attach to the review under way by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to reform the system that underpins pay and benefits in the common system, noting that the case for far-reaching reform is compelling, and that the**

risk of inaction in meeting the repeatedly expressed concern of the General Assembly[3] and other governing bodies over the competitivity of United Nations conditions of employment and in addressing the lack of flexibility of the current system with respect to responding to organizations' diverse needs, far outweighs the challenges associated with the initiative. Stressing that these reforms are vital for the improvement of organizational performance and to complement other major management reforms under way, Executive Heads called on the Commission to exercise leadership in moving forward this important initiative.

42. CEB recalled its decision calling for an independent review aimed at strengthening both the international civil service and the Commission itself. It expressed the hope that such a review would be undertaken as soon as possible.

43. CEB noted that the two High-level Committees are making good progress in their work and have moved beyond the organizational phase towards addressing substantive issues — both within the scope of their own responsibilities and in support of CEB. It expressed its appreciation to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the two Committees and noted the support provided by the secretariat which is accountable to all CEB members.

IV. Other matters

Dates of next CEB session

44. It is proposed that the next session of CEB be held on Friday and Saturday, 25 and 26 October 2002, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. To facilitate advance planning, CEB decided to set, in the future, the dates of its first regular session during the first week of April and its second regular session in the last week of October.

45. CEB paid tribute to Mr. Mike Moore and Mrs. Mary Robinson whose terms in office would end before the next session of CEB, as well as to Mrs. Catherine Bertini whose term in office had already ended prior to the present CEB session. CEB commended their outstanding leadership as heads of their respective organizations and cited their invaluable contributions to international cooperation and development, and the advancement of human rights and provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as to the work of CEB.

Notes

[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] General Assembly resolution 46/151, annex, sect. II.

[3] In resolution 55/258, section XII, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that a competitive package of conditions of service was a prerequisite for the successful achievement of goals of human resources management reform.